



February 27, 2023

Senator Rick Lopes, Co-Chair
Representative Joseph P. Gresko, Co-Chair
Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Support for the EPR Provisions of HB 6664, An Act Managing Waste and Creating a Waste Authority

Dear Co-Chairs Lopes and Gresko, Vice Chairs Hochadel and Palm, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of the EPR provisions of HB 6664.**

My name is Caroline James and I'm the Director of Sustainability at Atlantic Packaging. Earlier today you heard the testimony of our president, Wes Carter, in support of HB 6664. I came to Atlantic after completing an MBA at the Yale School of Management, where I researched packaging EPR and its positive effects on businesses and recycling rates. I decided to join the team at Atlantic because I saw that this was a company that was going to be willing to see the plastic waste crisis around us and actually do something about it. Under Wes' leadership, we have been advocating for our industry's regulation through packaging EPR. I am proud to serve under him to improve our industry's impact on the planet through market-based, innovative policy mechanisms like EPR.

Ideally, companies would be able to solve the waste crisis without policy intervention. However, there are three things standing in the way: the volume and complexity of material, insufficient infrastructure, and challenging economic incentives.

First, estimates suggest that packaging comprises 28 to 40 percent of total municipal solid waste generation in the US. For a state that's challenged by its infrastructure and space to manage waste, it's critical that we keep packaging material in circulation for as long as possible, rather than letting it fill up our landfills.

Unfortunately, these challenges can't be solved simply by expanding recycling as it currently exists, because the packaging waste mix has grown more complex. Single-stream recycling faces constant contamination from an increasingly complex array of packaging formats, particularly the flexible plastic bags and films that clog machinery at MRFs.

Additionally, even companies that want to do the right thing are facing economic pressure not to. I work with consumer goods companies every day which have set ambitious goals to use more recycled content in their packaging. However, the demand for recycled plastic, in particular, is several times higher than the supply available, especially for food-grade plastic. The expense of recycling and high levels of contamination result in recycled materials costing far more than their virgin alternatives. Brands are trying to do the right thing, but they are not set up for success because it's not feasible or economical to source the recycled content they need.

In summary, we have tons of material to recycle, but insufficient infrastructure to recycle it, and not enough incentives for companies to use recycled or recyclable packaging materials.

This is where packaging EPR can make a huge difference. Packaging EPR will help producers recover the valuable packaging material they are selling into the Connecticut economy so they can make



recycled content out of it. This is a pro-business policy that will help brands reach their sustainability goals in a more economical way by leveling the playing field for more recyclable and recycled packaging.

We respectfully urge the Committee to report out HB 6664 favorably.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at carolinej@atlanticpkg.com.

Sincerely,

Caroline James
Director of Sustainability, Atlantic Packaging